

A decorative border with a repeating floral motif surrounds the central text area. At the top center of the border is a small emblem featuring a book and a lamp. At the bottom center is a stylized archway or gateway motif.

तमसी मा ज्योतिर्गमय

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SANTINIKETAN









# THE PINE-TREE

(MATSU)

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*First published January 1916.*

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TAKEDA IZUMO

THE PINE-TREE

(MATSU)

A Drama, adapted from the Japanese

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY CAUSERIE ON THE  
JAPANESE THEATRE

BY

M. C. MARCUS

JAPANESE DRAWINGS  
REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ORIENTAL  
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CAUSERIE  
ON THE JAPANESE THEATRE



## I.

### SOME GLIMPSES OF OLD JAPANESE LITERATURE.

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**T**HE literature of a nation is at once the result and the mirror of its national character. There is perhaps more truth in this than in BUFFON'S "*Le style, c'est l'homme.*" The Far-Eastern insular empire has for many a century enjoyed a civilisation which, with respect to the material as well as the ideal side, has reached a very high standard. The most delicate flower of Japanese civilisation is an extraordinary, lofty sense of honour, which among other things gives us the explanation of that curious custom of



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suicide called "*Harakiri*." But on the other hand there exists a vast amount of low, Oriental sensuality, a continual incitement to lust and cruelty. All these qualities, good and bad, will be found in the Japanese literature. Again, truly artistic as they are, they seem never to have sought to overstep the limits of pure decorative art, and just as in their paintings they have always been content to treat the human figure in a purely conventional manner, without any light and shade, so is their literature generally somewhat misty and lacking perspective.

Considering the uncommon talent of the Japanese as a nation, and considering the extensive differences which separate them from their Mongol neighbours, the Chinese, it is most remarkable that they should have actually borrowed from them

## OLD JAPANESE LITERATURE.

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their written characters and even some of their literary forms. More than that, they kept the ideographic Chinese writing even after they had invented their own phonetic alphabet, consisting of 48 letters, which they write and pronounce in two different fashions—the *katukana* (the square hand) and the *fragana* (the running hand) which has several varying styles. There are two distinct Japanese languages, the spoken and the written. In the latter one notices a great difference in the inflexions, which are in nearly all cases totally unlike those used in the colloquial language. Further, in writing, the Japanese have kept a large amount of old expressions and words fallen in disuse in conversation. Finally, in writing, they mix the Chinese ideographic characters with the Japanese double-meaning phonetic

## SOME GLIMPSES OF

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letters. All this may give an idea how intensely difficult it is to read and write Japanese. Like the Chinese, the Japanese do not use nib and writing ink, but brush and Indian ink. The lines of writing are perpendicular and read downwards (for they say: "Writing shows man's thoughts and man stands upright"). The columns begin to the extreme right of the reader, and thus a Japanese book starts where our volumes end.



Love is supposed to have inspired the first ode composed in Japan, the Emperor Jimmu having been moved to song on meeting the maiden Isuzu. It is said that at this time—namely, in the 7th century B.C.—there lived also a poet called SOSANO-ONO-MIKOTO. But there is ground for disbelieving

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ancient Japanese chronology. The reason for such doubt is the extraordinary longevity assigned by the chronology to the first Mikados. The Emperor Jimmu ascended the throne in 660 B.C. Of his first fourteen successors eleven are said to have lived considerably over one hundred years. One of them, Keikō, reached the age of one hundred and forty-three years, while his predecessor, Suinin, attained an age of but two years less. These exaggerations which only ceased after the year 399 A.D. make it rather difficult to assign correct dates to early historical events. However this is of no consequence. The one thing which matters is that while Jimmu was Mikado the poet SOSANO-ONO-MIKOTO invented the national metre called *uta*. It consists of thirty-one syllables, sometimes thirty - two,

## SOME GLIMPSES OF

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arranged as a distich, but written in five lines containing 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables respectively. The break is placed after the third line. The meaning of each such distich is continuous, though the last two lines must either be an antithesis to what has gone before, or a varied expression of the identical meaning. The first half always prepares the reader for the second one. Thus the following lament of a mother on the loss of her child :

- 5    *Why has the harsh wind*  
7    *Carried away the blossoms*  
5    *With his savage breath*
- 7    *And left untouched, uninjured*  
7    *The leaves of the worn out*  
      *tree ?*

Lyrical poetry soon became a favourite study, and it is charac-

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teristic of the position of woman in Japanese society that we find many ladies among the crowd of poets, ancient and modern. At the beginning of the third century SOTO-ORI-IME, the Mikado Inkyō's Empress, was a celebrated poetess. The most popular form of poetry was and remained the lyric in the *uta* form. There are serious and jesting lyrics, erotic, didactic, and satiric, full of quaint modes of thought and turns of expression. Yet it seems rather impossible to translate them into a foreign language, for there is no hope of rendering all the allusions contained in the original. LEON DE ROSNY, in his *Anthologie Japonaise*, has, however, succeeded in imitating the delicacy of some of the erotic lyrics. The Japanese possess several collections of these national lyrics. The oldest of these collec-

## SOME GLIMPSES OF

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tions dating from the third century is called "*Man-jo-shiu*," which means "the collection of one thousand leaves." But the most popular is the "*Hyak-niu-ishiu*" or "collection of the hundred poets," which appeared much later and contains several pieces written by Emperors. This anthology is to be found in the Mikado's palace as well as in the beggar's hut, it exists in the cheapest editions and in the most magnificent, and everybody knows the lyrics it contains. There exists a metric English translation of the "*Hyak-niu-ishiu*," by J. V. DICKINS.

In the earliest times there was but one seat of learning and literature in Japan : Kyōto, the capital of sensuous delight, Kyōto, where the Mikado resided. The nobles composing his court enjoyed generally a very quiet life, and loved to

## OLD JAPANESE LITERATURE.

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devote their time to poetry, which they held in highest honour, and to the writing of diaries. These diaries form the first historical works of the Japanese. A number still exist and offer a fascinating insight into the life at Kyōto in days of yore. Again, it is to be noted that many of the best writings were done by women.

The first work treating of Japanese history seems to have been written in 620 A.D., with the Empress SUIKŌ (593 - 628) as editress, but it has not been preserved. The same fate occurred to the next work which appeared sixty years later. But at the same time the Mikado Temmu (673-686) ordered that all the then existing records should be compiled and carefully examined to remove all possible mistakes. One of the noblemen of the court, called HIYEDA - NO - ARE (some



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writers affirm that HIYEDA-NO-ARE was a woman) was entrusted with the editorship. Soon, however, Temmu died, and it was only in 711 during the reign of the Empress Gemniō (708-715) that the work was finished and appeared under the title "*Kojiki*," which means "record of ancient things."

Only nine years later another similar work appeared under the auspices of Gemniō's successor, the Empress Genshō (715-723). Its name was "*Nihongi*" ("The Japanese Record"), and it seems at first to have completely superseded the former work "*Kojiki*." This is easy to understand. The "*Kojiki*" was pure Japanese, and had the object of preserving true ancient Japanese spirit; while the "*Nihongi*" showed many traces of Chinese influence and was in accordance with Chinese ideas. It

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should be noted that a part of the learned and of the ladies of the court began at that time to devote their studies to the cultivation of the Chinese language. But more than a thousand years later the "*Kojiki*" came back to honours. Under the title "*Kojikiden*" and accompanied by a most elaborate commentary it was republished by the great historian MOTOORI NORINAGA. He worked at it for 32 years, from 1764 to 1796. The printing of the great work took about as long, from 1789 to 1822. MOTOORI himself did not see the printing finished, for he died in 1801.

For many centuries the writing of poetry and of historical records went on separately, side by side. Finally, at the end of the twelfth century, both were united in a great epic. However, if I call the work to which I allude an epic, it

## SOME GLIMPSES OF

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must not be thought that it can in any way be compared to the products of real epic poetry, as for instance the Homeric works. It is much more in the style of our mediæval rhymed chronicles. The title indicates this. It is called *Feike monogatari*, which means a "history of the Feike dynasty." Its author's name was IKINAGA, and the work numbers twelve volumes. It is said that it was popularised by some blind rhapsodists called *seobuts*.

The first brilliant period of Japanese literature seems to have occurred in the ninth and tenth centuries ; and not of literature only, but of art in general. It was the time when the beautiful Onono Komachi, the Japanese Ninon de Lenclos, assembled in her *salon*, if I may say so, all the wits and high intellects of Kyōto ; the

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time when HADA KAWAKATSU, the Japanese Wagner, wrote his 33 musical dramas (although some writers place him in the sixth century, asserting that his "operatic" works were already completed in 586), the time when the first erotic novels were produced; the time when ARIWARA NO NARIHIRA, a dazzling lady-killer, wrote his enchanting lyrics.

NARIHIRA was indeed a great poet, and although a thousand years have gone by, he still lives in the memory of the Japanese, playing somewhat the part of our Don Juan. His was the most fascinating beauty, and the pretty, gentle ladies of Kyōto simply died for his love.

It is by the way rather amusing for us occidental people to see an example of the taste of these ladies. We possess several like-

## SOME GLIMPSES OF

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nesses of this Japanese Apollo credited with so many tears of beautiful women. OGATA KORIN, who shares with HISHIKAWA MORONOBU the reputation of the greatest Japanese artist, has painted NARIHIRA's features on a good many of his pictures. Of course, these NARIHIRA-images are not to be taken as real likenesses, for KORIN (1657-1716) lived during the second classical period, the GENROKHU-era. But feeling a certain affinity with the nobleman of the ninth century he wanted to give a decorative representation of NARIHIRA's characteristic features. He shows the poet with shaved eyebrows, with rather extraordinary eyes and lips, with enormous cheeks and a bull's neck. Such was the typical beauty of this immortal man, whose prominent traits had been preserved in

## OLD JAPANESE LITERATURE.

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innumerable woodcuts, on parasols, on shawls, on teapots, etc.

Not only have his work and his portrait come down to us, but the poet of the old, perfumed court has himself been the hero of one of the finest products of Japanese literature. An anonymous poet, soon after NARIHIRA's death, collected all the many stories about his love adventures, and wove them into a charming garland of novels and stories called *Isé Monogatari*, which means "stories from Isé."

The second period of brilliancy in Japanese art and literature, the GENROKHU-era, took place in the thirty years between 1680 and 1710. It was a time which strangely reminds us of our own rococo period, a time of lavish extravagance. After centuries of civil wars and bloody feuds, Japan enjoyed then the blessings of a

## SOME GLIMPSES OF

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long and happy peace, which had begun in 1603 when the Tokugawa dynasty came to the office of *shōgun*.

The *shōgun* (the full title *Sei-i-tai-shōgun* means “barbarian subjugating commander in chief”) was an hereditary chancellor of the Empire, prime minister and generalissimo, who held the real power, the *shōgunate* having been created in 1192 by the Emperor Takahira. After being successively in the hands of the Minamoto and the Hōjo family, the supremacy fell in 1603 into the hands of the Tokugawa dynasty by the appointment of Iyéyasu, the most consummate politician and general in Japanese history. He put an end to the scenes of bloodshed and anarchy from which the whole country had suffered terribly for two centuries back. By and by

## OLD JAPANESE LITERATURE.

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the power of the noblemen was broken. Iyéyasu began the work, his son Hidétada and his grandson Iyémitsu completed it. From this time the nobles sought to satisfy their ambition in fields other than military. Trade and manufacture received thus a great impetus, and the same may be said of art and literature.

Simplicity of life disappeared, and sybaritism prevailed. People remained for hours in the tea-houses talking of frivolous, nay, of lascivious things. In literature romanticism was at first most appreciated. But soon the piquancy which was sought for in life began to show itself in literature. At least one name must be mentioned : SAIKAKU, who wrote the most wonderful satirical novels, and whose work may best be compared to that of the Neronian chronicler Petronius. It is perhaps



## SOME GLIMPSES OF OLD JAPANESE LITERATURE.

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remarkable that, while Petronius lived in Marseilles which was already then a centre of trade, SAIKAKU resided in Ōsaka which played a similar part. And like Petronius, SAIKAKU spent his days in sleep and his nights in pleasure. Like Petronius he became equally famous as an accomplished voluptuary and as a successful writer. Like Petronius the form of work he introduced in the literature of his country was the novel, based on the every day experience of contemporary life. For that second era of brilliancy in literature SAIKAKU played the same part of "*arbiter elegantiae*" as NARIHIRA had played in the first. In both these poets humour was combined with the rare gift of conceiving and representing human character.

## II.

### THE ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE DRAMA.

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**U**P to this very day many Japanese nobles feel a certain repulsion for the theatre. And certainly the drama does not hold the position it enjoys in Europe. This may also account for the fact that no great classic playwright such as Molière or Shakespeare was ever known in Japan. Still, theatre-going is a favourite amusement, especially among the lower classes in the large towns ; while persons of rank prefer to engage actors and have the plays performed in private at

## THE ELEMENTS

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home. The Mikado has a court theatre. Generally speaking, it is not fashionable nowadays to go to a public theatre, nor has it ever been fashionable except in the GENROKHU-era, when noblemen not only visited the theatres, but even seem to have taken part in the performances of the musical dramas called *nō*, which mostly treat of patriotic legends.



The elements of the Japanese drama are music, song and dance, besides legendary or historical narrative and pantomime. All these elements are purely native. But apart from these elements the theatre is clearly to be regarded as a Chinese importation. Nor has it attempted to emancipate itself from the conventional Chinese types. Yet there is one difference between Chinese and Japanese drama. The

## OF JAPANESE DRAMA.

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Chinese drama can never claim to be regarded as really poetic, not even in its diction, although its phraseology is full of metaphorical niceties and abounds in *poetic ornament*; while the Japanese drama, like the Indian, is full of *true poetry*. There exists a drama "*Iki - utsushi Asagao - nikki*" ("Asagao's true history"), a post-humous work of the poet YAMAVA KAKASHI, edited by SUISHŌ EN SHUJIN, which is in parts as much *bathed* in poetry as Kalidasa's "*Urvashi*," and the maiden Miyuki is as tender and charming a creature as her celebrated Indian sister Sakuntala. What does this prove? That Chinese influence may have given new notions to the Japanese, who are indeed the most adaptable race on earth, but that it has been unable to modify deeply the normal evolution of the Japanese soul.

## THE ELEMENTS

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I have stated music and dance to be elements of the Japanese theatre. I am not sure whether music is an adequate word. The Japanese seems to me to have no tune at all. There are scales, but the intervals are shocking to our ears. This is the major scale :

Kiu,	shō,	kaku,	tchi,	yu.
C,	D,	F,	G,	A.

and this the minor scale :

Kiu,	henshō,	kaku,	tchi,	henyu.
C,	D flat,	F,	G,	A flat.

This alone would suffice to give to the melodic phrase a weird, strange colour. But there is something else, I cannot say what, which renders their musical language unintelligible to our ears. They have in all their art a certain liking for the vague, the undetermined, the ambiguous. In music they attain it by finishing generally on the dominant instead of the tonic as

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we do. A child striking only the black keys of a piano, and that in a highly unmusical fashion, would give us something resembling Japanese music. It is for our ears an altogether discordant and unpleasant thing. This music, with its slow movements, is at the same time primitive and refined, it never tries to please the ear, but strives to rouse emotions and to express powerfully the dramatic sentiment.

The *koto* is an instrument consisting of an oblong box over which thirteen (in former times six) silk strings are stretched. It is played with ivory finger tips and forms the fundamental part of the Japanese orchestra. The *kotos* are, with the *fuyûs* (flutes), the only instruments of Japanese origin. All the others have been imported from China. There is the *shamicenn*, a sort of three-stringed guitar with

## THE ELEMENTS

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a long neck, a very popular instrument, the strings of which are struck by an ivory or bamboo quill ; the *biwa*, a guitar with four strings ; the *djin-daiko*, a drum, used in battle music ; bells and big drums. Altogether there exist two kinds of flageolet, a vertical harp and a horizontal one, two kinds of guitar, a cymbal, a species of harmonica, an oboe, a species of pandean pipe, several kinds of flute, and five kinds of drum. A Japanese band is sometimes composed of a great number of musicians. As early as in the year 453 A.D. there was at the burial of the Emperor Ingyō an orchestra of 80 musicians playing a dirge.

The second element of the Japanese theatre is dance. In old times dance seems to have been a religious ceremony, as we may still find it among some savage tribes.

## OF JAPANESE DRAMA.

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We know that once a year virgins danced before the shrine of Tenshō Daijin (the Sun-goddess) in order to lure her from her sacred place. Even this first and oldest dance contains a dramatic idea, an embryo of a dramatic action ; while the *hayatomai* (warrior dance) was somewhat in the style of a *divertissement*. At the same time there appeared also dances symbolising, as in all countries, the relations of the sexes.

Singing, dancing, and composing went on hand in hand. Every new achievement in the one art added something to the other two—especially as imperial progresses, public feasts, religious ceremonies, and private entertainments were all occasions for playing instruments and dancing. Some of these old dances are still executed in our time. I have seen a dance called



## THE ELEMENTS

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*tamabatu* performed by tiny little girls, six to eight years old, which forms one of the most charming sights one can imagine. They wore rich satin robes with long sleeves, and broad belts embroidered with gold and claret colour designs. They had high coiffures with silver pins and tortoiseshell ornaments, and purple socks. While dancing they played small drums with gilt frame and a silken cord, and the drumsticks were lacquered.

Dancing was not only confined to women and girls, there were also men, and even old men, who used to perform dances. One, for instance, was usually executed by old merchants. The principal occasion for all such kinds of enjoyment were the *matsuri*, annual festivities held in honour of the birthday of some god, each town having its own tutelary deity.

## OF JAPANESE DRAMA.

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These public entertainments seem to have begun as far back as 650 B.C. One dance, the *kagura*, a kind of hieratic pantomime, accompanied by a slow weird music, deserves special mention, because it is one step nearer to the drama, and because stages were first built for its performance.

Not all these dances were of a noble character ; some, called *rika*, were accompanied by rather vulgar street-songs ; others, the *zokuyō* by popular ballads. Of these popular amusements the most favourite was the *sarugaku* or monkey mime, the name of which sufficiently describes its nature. Its rival was the *dengaku* or bucolic mime, for the performance of which masks were worn, and which was at one time greatly encouraged by the legislators. The *dengaku* then assumed a splendour, a pomp, a magnificence

## THE ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE DRAMA.

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of costume not previously known nor imagined. Nevertheless, the *sarugaku* superseded the *dengaku*, and by degrees became the *nō*. Curiously, and although having its origin in the popular monkey mime, the *nō* is the aristocratic form of the oldest drama.



### III.

## EARLY TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

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**I** HAVE said that the dances were always accompanied by song. At first these songs were purely lyric or descriptive. But gradually they became recitatives having generally a sacred or legendary text. On one side of the platform sat a singer, who accompanied himself on the *shamiccenn* and who narrated some well-known marvellous or romantic story from the early times. Soon, when such a recitative contained a speech

## EARLY TRAGEDY

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in direct narrative, it became the custom for one of the dancers to deliver it. And dialogue being the the next step, the drama was created. Such drama was called *nō*. Its subjects were always noble and avoided the "vulgar acts of life." Therefore actors must not make love in public, nor eat or drink, nor sleep, nor die. However, only natural death was considered a "vulgar act," but not a murder, an execution, or, above all, a *harakiri*.

One of the favourite themes of the *nō* was what I should like to call the Japanese Philemon and Baucis. The recitative singer had a fine part, describing the beauties of the landscape where the old couple lived and telling of their feelings. The old people also had nice things to say : "Do you remember this ?" or : "At such time we did that !" There was

## AND COMEDY.

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also generally a part for a benevolent spirit ; while the Chorus appeared then as herons with handsome feathers, or as silvery salmons, or preferably as flowers. This latter costume was at all times much patronised, and in the seventh century flower festivals were much in fashion. At these *utagaki*, as they were called, one could see girls representing peach-blossom, plum-blossom, apple-blossom, iris, lotus, dancing through the streets, while other maidens dressed simply in blue silk robes with red girdles sang graceful stanzas to the sound of the *shamicenn*.

The monologue was banned from the *nō* except in the first scene of the play. After the reciter had given in an introductory stanza a short description of where the action was to take place (for there was mostly no scenery), the principal

## EARLY TRAGEDY

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character used to enter with the words : “My name is so and so, my father has this occupation, my brother that, and such are the circumstances which obliged me to come here.” The exposition being thus terminated, the action went on, frequently interrupted by remarks of the reciter, as for instance : “Look, look at him . . . Scorn fills his noble heart . . . Now he touches the handle of his sword . . . He will draw it, he will kill his enemy . . . But no ! He masters his wrath and he goes out, banging the door.” In one word : the reciter explains things which we are used, in occidental theatres, to see performed—except in opera, where sometimes our chorus assumes a part resembling that of the Japanese reciter. But one will already have noticed that there is a certain similarity between our

## AND COMEDY.

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opera and Japanese drama—with that one difference, however, that the Japanese actor is an admirable performer, while our operatic singer . . . but it is not on the occidental theatre that I write.

The old form of the *nō* still survives, and in our own day they are performed at the *matsuri*. But of course tradition which has preserved the old plays has also somewhat altered them. Duty in all these dramas plays a great part, and the stoicism of the *samurai* (military men) has often been chosen as a tragic subject.

Yoshimaza, the most extravagant man ever born in Japan, celebrated for his hobbies (the tea cult, the incense cult, the landscape-garden cult, the art cult), was also a most remarkable patron of the drama, and a dramatic author, SCAMI, was his *protégé*. But one of the best



## EARLY TRAGEDY

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of these dramatic poets was KWANZE NOBUMITSU, who wrote the celebrated *Ataka-nō* (about 1485), of which, I am told, there exists an English translation.

Of course, all drama could not be serious. And what the comedy is to our occidental theatre, the *kyogen* is to Japanese drama. It is feasible to adapt Japanese tragedy to our European taste, but any such hope is impossible if one considers a *kyogen*. Either their impropriety would shock European delicacy, or we should find these comedies utterly childish. I cannot give an example of the former kind, but I may tell the story of two of the childish ones.

1. Three men undertake a pilgrimage, promising not to quarrel during the journey. After a few hours, feeling very tired, they take a rest. And while the

## AND COMEDY.

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one is asleep, the two others shave his head. Of course, when he wakes again, he quarrels. So' he has to return home. But he will revenge himself. He goes to the other pilgrims' wives, and tells them that their husbands have met with an accident and are dead. Thereupon the two women, as a sign of mourning, shave their heads. When the two men come home from their pilgrimage the third one awaits them and tells them the same story : The wives have met with a fatal accident ; and he shows them their hair to prove it. And the two men in their turn shave their heads as a sign of mourning. Now the rascal who has made all this shaving mischief discloses his fraud and produces his own wife, the only one of the lot who has any hair on her head. But when he wants to prove it and

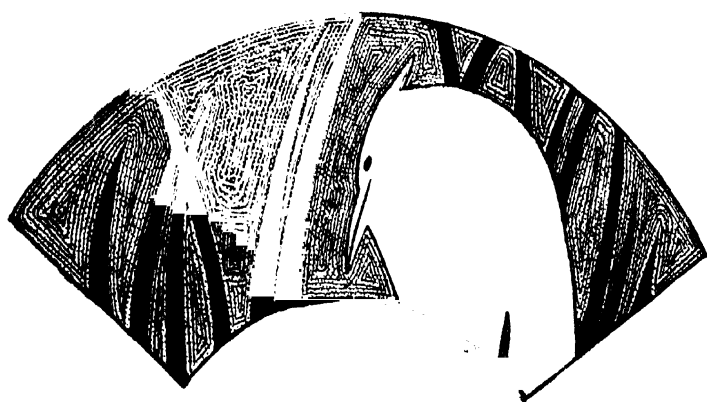


## AND COMEDY.

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sensible, or I will teach you a lesson !” She only sneers at him. So while she turns her back he pours some ink into the basin. And when she next marks her tears they are black. *Tableau.* Curtain.





#### IV.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAMA.

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**F**ROM the *nō* there branched off in the seventeenth century a more lyrical form of drama, called the *djiōruri*. But this was soon superseded by a new system, the *kabuki*, or psychological drama, the evolution of which continues up to our time. It is this form, performed originally in the *shibai* (lawns) which interests us most.

In 1575 a celebrated and beautiful dancer called O-Koumi visited Kyōto. Although she was

## DEVELOPMENT

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not leading precisely a virtuous life her fame was so great that she was admitted to the Imperial palace. Virtue, by the way, has never played a very important part in Japan with women who had other accomplishments to be proud of. The beautiful Aki, who became the mistress of the Emperor Ichigō, had hair that exceeded her stature by ten feet. Tamabushi, the mistress of the Emperor Uda, was a clever dancer, and the six celebrated *demi-mondaines* Sei, Murasaki, Dainō-Sanussi, Koshikibu, Izumi, and Udaishō were all brilliant writers. As for O-KOUMI, she was exquisitely refined in all her ways, her manners were restful yet winsome, her conversation was a piquant mixture of feminine inconsequence and sparkling repartee. Already as an *odori-ko* (dancing child) she had

## OF THE DRAMA.

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known how to fascinate everybody by the gentle rhythmical grace of her movements and her demure looks. When she arrived at Kyōto, the whole town soon talked of the inexhaustible list of her accomplishments, of her art, and of her costumes which were *chef d'œuvres* of decorative skill. No wonder that many men fell in love with her. Amongst them was NAGOYA SANZAEMON, the superintendent of the court festivities. It seems that it was she who had the idea of opening a popular theatre, of which SANZAEMON was to be the manager and she the star. The performances took place on some grassy land, and to this day the name of *shibai* is given to the Japanese theatre, although as early as 1624 SARUWAKA KANZABURO had built the first regular theatre in Yeddo. The plays produced were



## DEVELOPMENT

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called performances (*ki*) of song (*ka*) and dance (*bu*), and thus the denomination *kabuki* was formed. The success was prodigious. Unfortunately, very soon numerous *filles de joie* took to the profession. By and by actors came to be considered as outcasts, and it became so difficult for them to secure permission to play in the public gardens and squares that they had to be satisfied with the beds of the rivers, when in summer they were dried up ; whence the name *kawar-a-mono*, river-bed folk, which for a long time designated actors. Finally, in 1643, a law was made by which it was forbidden to women to take part in theatrical performances. It was therefore very fortunate that Japanese costume made it possible for men to play women's parts without spoiling the performances. Now-

## OF THE DRAMA.

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adays this edict is no longer enforced, but the custom still prevails. It is unusual to see an actress in Japan, although I must add that there exists in Tōkyō a theatre where all parts are played by women. The interdict of 1643 proved, however, to be an opportunity for the actor and skilled musician GENZAEMON, who made a great reputation by playing female parts.

The law of 1643 was not the only instance of trouble arising between the legislators and the theatre. At one time it became exceedingly fashionable to deliver in private circles the recitatives called *naga-uta*, which are considered as one of the chief ornaments of Japanese drama. Young girls, especially merchants' daughters, began to sing them to friends in special reunions which,

## DEVELOPMENT

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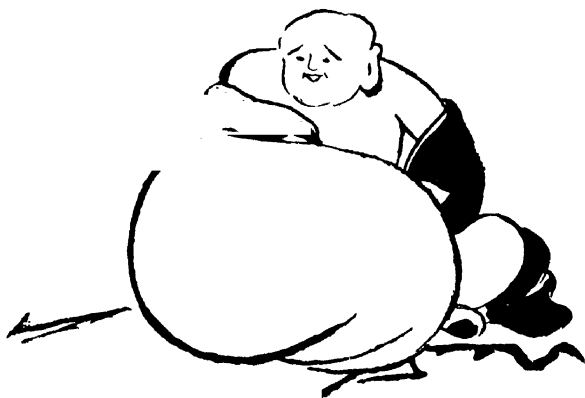
by and by, gave interesting matter to the *chronique scandaleuse*. So in 1805 these "at homes," and particularly the singing of the recitatives, were forbidden to the young ladies who, by acting thus, had "reduced themselves to the level of rogues and vagabonds."

Another time, when the Tokugawa legislators were greatly concerned about the immorality of the theatre, they promulgated a law that no theatre was to be more than two storeys high. There had been built first at Ōsaka and Kyōto, and then at Yeddo, theatres three storeys high, with rooms in the top storey for debauches of various kinds, and with secret passages leading from there to the manager's office. It was said that ladies, experiencing during the performances a sudden fancy for one or the other actor,

## OF THE DRAMA.

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used, at the end of the play, to go to the manager and to make terms with him for the cession of the contemplated actor for an hour or so, the manager and his employee sharing the profits thus realised. This scandalous state of things was abolished and henceforth theatres had but two storeys, and the *yose*, plain, comfortless music halls, only one.





## V.

### THE CLASSICAL PERIOD.— TAKEDA IZUMO AND HIS “PINE-TREE.”

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**T**HE Japanese consider as their greatest playwright **TSIKAMATSU MONZAEMON** (1653-1734) who wrote not less than 74 historic dramas and 37 *dramas de mœurs*. He has been called the Japanese Sophocles and the Japanese Shakespeare. There is always something vexatious in comparisons of this kind, although such title might perhaps not be intended as anything more than a synonym for poetic pre-eminence. But I have already given the reasons why there never was a really great popular dramatic

## THE CLASSICAL PERIOD.

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author in Japan. Indeed, there is nothing to be found in **TSIKAMATSU MONZAEMON** like the ever-fresh blossoms from the inexhaustible garden of a Sophocles or a Shakespeare. However, one may say that the skilful construction of **TSIKAMATSU**'s plays recalls that of Sophocles, and that the secret of this skill depends largely on the profound way in which he conceives the central situation in each of his fables. Again, to have understood how nearly burlesque and tragedy are related, and to have interwoven his dramas with clowneries, might be called Shakespearean. But the absolute finish, the superlative degree of harmony which we find in Sophocles and Shakespeare will be sought for in vain in the great Japanese. And this judgment holds also good for his numerous successors. They are all exceed-

## THE CLASSICAL PERIOD.

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ingly clever, they know how to unfold their plots by subtle gradations, and how to carry the hearer onward, steadily and swiftly, and how to give a feeling of impending catastrophe, but their work is never so completely alive as that of Sophocles or Shakespeare, never such an organic whole. Amongst these contemporaries and successors of TSIKAMATSU we may name TAKEMOTO TSIKONGO who wrote 90 plays, and NAMIKI SOSUKE (who died in 1745) author of the celebrated drama "*Itchinotani futaba gunki*" (Reminiscences of the first campaign of two young men at the assault of Itchinotani). This brilliant piece of work was completed by his five disciples ASSADA ITCHIO, NAMIOKA KEIJI, NAMIKI CIŌZA, MAMBA SANSŌ, and TAJOTUKE GENROKHU ; it was published in 1752, seven years after the



## THE CLASSICAL PERIOD.

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master's death.—I must also name **TSIKAMATSU HAIGKI**, the author of the drama “*Uta-dai-mon*” (1780) and **TAKEDA IZUMO**, this last author being probably the one whose art appeals most to occidental feeling.

**TAKEDA IZUMO** was born in 1688. In 1713, when he was 25, he opened, together with his friend **TSIKAMATSU MONZAEMON**, a marionette theatre which became famous very quickly for the quality of the plays performed there and for the magnificence of the costumes, which were imitated in all theatres. I have already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter the high esteem in which the Japanese hold **TSIKAMATSU**. That he was a very talented and able man is further proved by his renowned historical novel “A vassal's loyalty,” which is not only famous in Japan, but has also been translated into

## THE CLASSICAL PERIOD.

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European languages. But it seems to me that the dramatic genius of the partnership was TAKEDA IZUMO. One of their most illustrious marionette plays was “*Kokusen-ya, the Pirate king*” ; and the success of this was perhaps surpassed by the play “*The vendetta of the 47 ronin*,” which was first performed in 1748, fourteen years after TSIKAMATSU’s death.\*

But in the meantime TAKEDA IZUMO had also written plays for the ordinary theatre, and of these

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\* TSIKAMATSU MONZAEMON had produced in 1706 a tragedy called “*Goban Taiheiki*,” based on the story of the *47 ronin*. Shortly before his death he proposed to TAKEDA IZUMO to write a play on the same subject for the marionette theatre, and they sketched it together. On this plan it was written by TAKEDA IZUMO, together with MIYOSHI SHORAKU and NAMIKI SENRYU. It is known under the title “*Chushingura*,” or “*The loyal retainers of Akao*.” There exists an incomplete English translation in prose by Jukishi Inonye.

## TAKEDA IZUMO

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the historical tragedy “*Sugawara denjon tenarai kagami*” (a rather fantastical title that means “Mirror of calligraphy after the chancellor Sugawara’s tradition”) is not only the most celebrated, but probably the most extolled of all Japanese dramas. It was written by TAKEDA IZUMO together with his three friends MIYOSHI SHORAKU (1693-1773 ?), NAMIKI SENRYU (1693-1749), and KOIZUMO, and first performed in 1746, ten years before TAKEDA IZUMO’s death.

Japanese plays have generally from twelve to twenty acts, and their performance takes a whole day, from the hour of the hare to the hour of the monkey, viz.: from 6 o’clock in the morning to 6 o’clock in the evening. Such is also the length of the “*Sugawara*” tragedy. But it is not always performed in full. Generally one

## AND HIS "PINE-TREE."

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single act of this play is given. This act, which was written by TAKEDA IZUMO alone, the most luminous part of the whole, is called "*Matsu*," "The pine-tree."\*

One thing is certain—namely, that the "Pine-tree" well presented never fails to make a deep impression, even on Europeans who by chance are present at a performance. True, the act of self sacrifice is so exaggerated that it may offend our more delicate feelings ; but the action is so tragic, the characters are so heroic, that we cannot but admire.

The author seems to have drawn from two sources. In the year 459 A.D. the Emperor Seinei ascended the throne. He perpetrated a wholesale murder of his own brothers, their children, and

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\* Also known under the title "*Terakoya*," "The Village School."

## TAKEDA IZUMO

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other members of the Imperial family. The whole Imperial line would have become extinct had not a child been secreted and reduced to the position of a serf in order to escape the quest of the official assassins.

This seems to have been the original story which inspired the poet. But, firstly, he could not possibly put an Emperor himself on the stage. For in these days the divinity that hedged a Mikado was such that no common eye ever beheld him, especially not on the stage of a theatre. And, secondly, the Emperors were nearly mythical beings who mostly had no authority at all. The chancellors were the real regents, and it was to the chancellors that vassals were loyal or faithless. The author had therefore to look for a chancellor to whom the anecdote of the saved

## AND HIS "PINE-TREE."

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child could apply. And his choice fell on the story of the chancellor Sugawara. — Sugawara - no - Michizane belonged to an ancient family of professional *littérateurs*. He had a high reputation as a calligraphist and scholar, and lived in a time when it was possible to become a prime minister by writing nicely a stanza on a theme given by the Mikado ; and this is exactly how Sugawara succeeded. He was, however, not fitted to cope with the immense difficulties of statesmanship. Besides, he had to struggle against a complicated situation. On the one hand there was the Emperor Uda who, although he had abdicated, still tried to take a prominent part in the administration ; on the other hand, Sugawara had to suffer from the jealousy of the Fujiwara representative Takihiro, a highly-gifted

## TAKEDA IZUMO

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but impetuous and arrogant young nobleman. Sugawara-no-Michizane, accused of conspiring to obtain the throne for his grandson (an Imperial prince having married his daughter), was banished to Dazaifu. His family and friends were all killed or reduced to serfdom, and he died in the following year (903). After his death all sort of mishaps befell his adversaries, and the superstition considered this ill-luck as a manifestation of his revengeful spirit. Finally, he was placed among the gods, and he became Tenjin, the god of calligraphy.

In the play, Sugawara-no-Michizane had among his servants a farmer named Shiratayu, whom his master treated with great benevolence. Sugawara-no-Michizane possessed three trees of which he was particularly fond, a plum-tree (*ume*), a cherry-tree (*sakura*)

## AND HIS "PINE-TREE."

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and a pine-tree (*matsu*). Of these trees the farmer Shiratayu had to take care.

One day Shiratayu became father of triplets, and the chancellor consented to be their godfather. He named them after his favourite trees : Umeō, Sakuramaru, and Matsuō.

When the three boys were grown up the first two took service with their godfather, who, after some time, made them *samurai* (military men)—while the third one, Matsuō, was placed with the chancellor's mighty adversary, the Fujiwara Tokihira, who in the play is also called Shihei.

Now follows the political struggle between Saguwara - no - Michizane and Tokihira, leading to the wholesale murder of the chancellor's followers and his own banishment. But Ganzō, a former vassal and





## AND HIS "PINE-TREE."

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the hint in these verses being clear enough. But the "pine-tree" was not "faithless," and the subsequent scenes show how Matsuō remained loyal.

The choice of the theme is characteristic, for against a background of truly Japanese treachery and cruelty we see an act of uncompromising fidelity to the cause of the liege-lord no less truly Japanese, a fidelity that grudges no sacrifice, however immense, however bitter it may be.





## VI.

### THEATRICAL CUSTOMS.

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**I**N the second part of this little volume the reader will find an adaptation of the “Pine-tree”—a free adaptation, let it be well understood, not a translation. Some of the scenic indications will not be found at all in the original, others only as recitatives called *ji* or *chobo*, while I have omitted some other recitatives which I thought useless. These recitatives, which give to the Japanese plays a character partly epic, partly dramatic, are so unusual for Europeans that their effect would have been absolutely disturbing. As the “Pine-tree” is

## THEATRICAL

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presented here I think it might be performed before an occidental public. In view of such an eventuality, I have written the names as phonetically as possible (for instance : Tokeeheera, Shoozigh), in order to avoid a different pronunciation by each of the actors, such as we sometimes hear on our own stage in other foreign plays.

I am sure that, should some manager try and present the "Pine-tree," he will not fail in greatly impressing the public. In Japan it is always successful, but few things performed on a stage can be compared to what the "Pine-tree" was with ICHIKAWA DANJURO, Japan's greatest actor, as Matsuō, and with ONOJE KIKUROGO, who was second only to DANJURO, as Ganzō. Like all Japanese actors, they were not so remarkable for their elocution as for their attitudes

## CUSTOMS.

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and movements. To give an impressive picture of real life is the aim of the Japanese actor. The great art consists to talk not so much with the tongue as with the body, and to show by the expression of the face not only simple passion, but also the subtle shades of sentiment. It is obvious that such a way of acting leads easily to melodramatic exaggerations ; it is also very tiring for the performers, and this may be considered as one more reason why women generally do not act.

With the Japanese the art of making up is not at all to be compared to the methods of our Western actors. Here, again, one finds much exaggeration, and a story is told of the actor YAMANAKA HEIKURO, who had made himself a head of a devil so hideous, that when his wife saw him she died of fright on the spot.

## THEATRICAL

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The characters which one finds in nearly all Japanese dramas are the *Aragotoshi* (a hard man), the *Djitsugotoshi* (a faithful, loyal man), the *Wagotoshi* (a young and pleasant man), and the *Djitsuakushi* (a bad cruel man).

The profession of an actor is even nowadays not considered as a high one, although one would no longer think of treating them as "rogues and vagabonds." On the average, they are not well paid. Still there are exceptions. When a play is staged it runs at least for 23 consecutive days. For such a term a first-class man like ICHIKAWA DANJURO would earn about 2,500 *yen* (£250), and his annual income may be estimated at 15,000 *yen* (£1,500). But it must not be forgotten that out of this sum he must provide his own costumes, and costumes are no trifle in Japan,

## CUSTOMS.

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as they must not only be made to suit the part, but also the character of the part.

For the last ten years or so, Japan has been under the influence of a fashion that had given a particular stamp to the country already two hundred years ago. In the windows of the silk merchants one can see many a *kimono* and *obi* (sash) made of a material of such an extraordinary pattern and of such bold colours that they attract the eyes of the passer-by, irrespective of age or sex. Purple and red, apricot and peach, turquoise blue and malachite green are united there into a strange and wonderful bouquet, which has the particularity of never looking vulgar, never being as shrill as the so-called "real Japanese" costumes one sees in our European shops, and which the poorest girl in Tōkyō would



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not dare to wear. For Japanese coloration remains artistic even when it comes near the limits of the permissible.

I think the secret consists in choosing one fundamental tone which alone might be very shrill, and to subdue it by some other softer colour ; the *obi*, the wide sash, is there to obtain this result. There are *obis* so beautiful that our Western ladies cannot imagine their value. And it happens that a Japanese beauty spends for one single *obi* more than a smart *Parisienne* for her whole toilette during a year.

One of the favourite patterns for the *obi* is a simple chessboard design made in black and gold, or blue and gold, or red and gold, and so on. But if you chance to look closely at it you will find, on costly *obis*, a different design in each of the

## CUSTOMS.

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squares—birds or flowers, executed with the most wonderful delicacy. Other *kimonos* and *obis* have very big designs, we see enormous wheels, large pine-branches, fishes in a cascade, bushes and deer, or even a complete miniature garden, embroidered with incomparable art.

Now what makes these dresses so exceedingly costly, is the fact that there are generally not two alike, and that many of them have been sketched by great painters. In the Imperial museum at Tōkyō some priceless garments, called *kosodé*, painted by KORIN himself, are preserved.

Needless to say that on the stage only imitations of these precious garments are worn, but even such imitations are sometimes very expensive. And there are not only the dresses, but the hairpins and combs, the little purses, the ribbons

## THEATRICAL

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of the *geta* (shoes with heels), the *tabi* (socks with a separate great toe). These *tabi* are very important in Japanese costume, and are made of heavy silk. They have also rather often the chessboard design with small ornaments, and are usually either red and yellow, or blue and yellow.

Now, if the costumes are always beautiful and sometimes of an extravagant richness, the same cannot be said of the scenery, which is always meagre and exiguous. The design is rough, primitive, and without any knowledge of the laws of perspective. Indeed, one may well not call it a scenery at all, the design being, with very few exceptions, purely ornamental. On the other hand, the front of the theatre is generally painted with much skill and fancy.

There are many little things

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which surprise the European visitor. To begin with, the surroundings of the theatre. I have already mentioned the length of the performances. And although there exists now a theatre where only half-day performances (*shintomi-za*) are given, food and refreshments must be provided for the audience. Therefore, one generally finds around a theatre a little city of tea-houses and restaurants.—The curtain does not rise, as in Europe, but is pulled sideways, and one can easily see the attendants who are entrusted with this work.—The orchestra (*hayashi*) is hidden behind the scenery, while in a sort of proscenium box the reciter sits, together with a *shamicenn* player, both being concealed behind a curtain of thin bamboo.—There is no applause by clapping hands as in our theatres, but the public

## THEATRICAL

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stimulates the actors by exclamations, in a way that may be compared to the encouraging and cheering of the dancers in Spain.—From the “Green Room” a bridge leads to the platform. This bridge is called “Flowerpath.” The “Green Room” is closed by a drapery, which the actors of small parts must lift for themselves. When the performers have some importance and reputation they have an attendant for the purpose of lifting this drapery. But the first actors, as well of *nogu* (drama) as of *kyogen* (comedy), have the title *taiya*, which confers the right to two assistants to hold up the curtain of the “Green Room” for their entries and exits.

Besides of the “Flowerpath” there is also an underground way permitting the actors to enter through the auditorium, which for

## CUSTOMS.

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this purpose is joined with the platform by a bridge. I may here remark that Max Reinhardt, when performing "*La belle Hélène*" in Munich and Berlin, "borrowed" this idea from the Japanese, and made the *dramatis personæ* enter through the auditorium, and, exactly as in Japan, they began talking while still walking through the rows of the public. Needless to say, that the German Press found Reinhardt's "originality" simply *kolossal*.

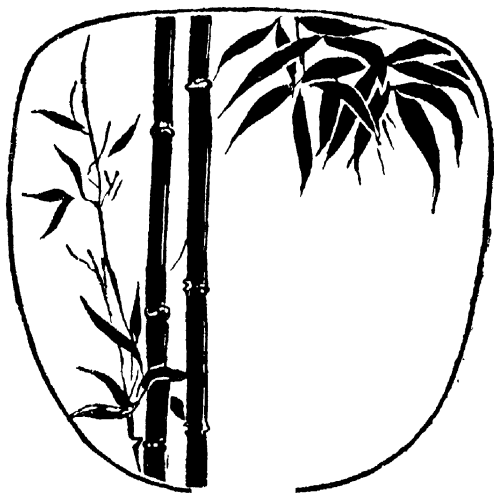


In concluding this very incomplete sketch, I wish to say that if the Japanese theatre has not shared the general progress, and has remained somewhat stationary for more than two hundred years, it is none the less very interesting. Although it may not in its long history have remained absolutely

## THEATRICAL CUSTOMS.

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free from foreign, mainly Chinese, influences, it is a national art which has always kept the marks of its origin, and is in no way unworthy of the splendid nation which every day we learn to appreciate more highly.



THE PINE-TREE  
(MATSU)

A DRAMA

BY

TAKEDA IZUMO





# THE PINE-TREE.

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MATSUŌ, a vassal of the Fujiwara chancellor  
Tokeeheera (Shihei).

MISTRESS CHEEYŌ, his wife.

KOTARŌ, their son (eight years).

KWAN SHOOZIGH, son of the former chancellor  
Saguwara-no-Michizane (eight years).

KWAN SHOOZIGH'S MOTHER, the former chancellor's  
wife.

GANZŌ, a vassal and pupil of the former chan-  
cellor, now master of a village school.

MISTRESS TONARMEE, his wife.

GEMBAH, Tokeeheera's chamberlain.

SANZOOKEE, MatsuŌ's servant-man.

SILLY, a boy of 15,	} GANZŌ's pupils.
CHOMA, a boy of 8,	
EWAMA, a boy of 10,	
TOKUZAN, a boy of 8,	
THREE OTHER BOYS,	

SOME SOLDIERS, under Gembah's command.

SOME PEASANTS.



The action takes place in the year 902, in the little village Seryō,  
in the class room of Ganzō's house and in the courtyard,  
which one can see when the principal door is opened.

## THE PINE-TREE.

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(SHOOZIGH, SILLY, and other pupils are all sitting on the floor, having each one a small desk on which is placed a scribbling book and, to the right, a box with Indian ink, to the left, a little box with books. With their writing brushes they are busy doing some exercises in Japanese letters. They often interrupt their work and are rather noisy. Most of them have their fingers stained with ink, some even their faces.)

### SILLY.

I think it is too stupid ! The master isn't at home, and we are sitting here and studying !  
(Raising a sheet of paper) Look ! Look ! I have painted a bonze with a bald head !

(They all laugh, most of them get up, there is great noise.)

### SHOOZIGH

(without interrupting his work).

Silly, you ought to do something better than to paint such wicked images. You're the biggest here, and unable to write the simplest letters. Fie ! What a shame !

### SILLY.

Oh, you are a wise one. Behold the wise one, the cheeky wise one !

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

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### **FIRST BOY**

(hitting Silly with his ruler).

You are not to insult him, Silly !

### **SILLY**

(howling).

Oh ! oh ! he wants to kill me ! (Takes his ink and pours it over the first boy's head.)

### **SECOND BOY.**

Big fool ! The eldest of us, and starts crying when one touches him !

### **THIRD BOY.**

We'll give him a good thrashing, the boaster.  
(They attack Silly with their rulers and a great, noisy battle ensues.)



(Mistress Tonarmee comes from an adjoining room.)

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

Aye ! You naughty boys ! You are fighting again ? Won't you keep quiet ? Sit down, all of you ! Take your places, and work ! The master will soon be back. If you work well, he'll give you a half-holiday.

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### SOME OF THE BOYS.

Oh, that's fine ! That's splendid ! We'll work ! We'll work ! (They all settle down and begin again to work, reading and writing. They are heard pronouncing the syllables they write down :) Ee-ro-ha-nee-ho-ha-to . . .



(Enter MISTRESS CHEEYŌ, leading her boy KOTARŌ by her hand. SANZOOKEE follows them carrying a small desk, a box with books, and two parcels.)

### SANZOOKEE

(from outside, opening the door a little).

Holloa ! May we come in ?

### MISTRESS TONARMEE.

Please ! Please !

### MISTRESS CHEEYŌ

(entering with Kotarō).

You are very kind. (Curtseys on both sides.) I sent a messenger this morning to Mr. Ganzō, to ask whether he could receive my little boy as a pupil. Mr. Ganzō having consented very courteously, I thought I had best bring the child at once. Here he is.

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### MISTRESS TONARMEE.

Oh ! Is this your son ? He is welcome. A pretty, gentle child.

### MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.

You are very gracious. I hope he will not prove a nuisance. We only came to stay in this village a few days ago. We have taken lodgings quite at the other end. I was much pleased to hear that you have a boy of the same age. Is he one of these ?

### MISTRESS TONARMEE.

Certainly. It is this one. (To Shoozigh) Come here and greet this lady . . . (SHOOZIGH comes nearer and bows very low before Mistress Cheeyō.) Yes, this is Mr. Ganzō's son and heir.

### MISTRESS CHEEYŌ

(looking alternately at the faces of both boys as if to compare them).

What a beautiful, lovely child, Mistress Ganzō ! But I do not see your husband. Perhaps he is absent ?

## *The Pine-Tree.*

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### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

I regret to say he is. Early this morning he was invited to call upon the mayor for a conference and a festive repast. It is rather a long way, and it may still be some time ere he returns. But if you wish to see him, I will at once send somebody to fetch him.

### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

Oh, no, no ! Do not trouble yourself. I have an errand in the next village, business of all sorts ; I will come back afterwards, and will then certainly find Mr. Ganzō . . . Holloa, Sanzookee ! Give me these things. (SANZOOKEE gives her the two parcels. The first one is wrapped up in a white paper and adorned with a sign of remembrance. MISTRESS CHEEYŌ takes it and places it politely before Mistress Tonarmee). Will you be good enough to accept this as a small token of remembrance of this day ?

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE**

(with a deep curtesy).

Oh ! This is really too good of you, really too good . . .

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

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### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

Do not mention it. And the contents of this box (she gives Mistress Tonarmee the second parcel) are for your boys, your pupils.

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

My best thanks, my best thanks, you are really too generous ! My husband will also be greatly obliged.

### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

And now I think I had better go. I entrust my child to you. (To Kotarō) You will be good and obedient, my dear. I only go to the next village, I will soon be back.

### **KOTARŌ.**

Oh, mother, don't leave me alone ! Take me with you ! (And as she is leaving he pulls her sleeve.)

### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

What a little coward you are ! Are you not ashamed, Kotarō ? (To Mistress Tonarmee.) You see how spoilt he is. (Caressing him.) There's a good boy, a nice boy. Remain here and be brave. I will soon be back. (Exit with Sanzookee. But when leaving the room, and afterwards when she is already outside, she turns her head again and again, looking passionately and



## *The Pine-Tree.*

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tenderly upon Kotarō. Finally, after having closed the door she returns once more.) Oh, excuse my troubling you again. I must have forgotten my fan. (They look for it.)

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE**

(after a few moments).

But look, you have it in your hand, there is your fan.

### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ**

(surprised).

Oh ! It is true ! How foolish I am ! (As she now definitely leaves the room, she looks once more at her son longingly, sadly.)

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE**

(consoling Kotarō).

Don't be sad, my darling. Come to my son and play with him. (She leads him to Shoozigh and tries all sorts of means to brighten him.)



(Enters GANZŌ.)

(He is pale and worried. Stopping at the door he looks at the pupils, examining their faces, without noticing Kotarō.)

### **GANZŌ**

(angrily, aside).

Peasants' faces . . . Common peasants' heads . . . No use . . . too vulgar, too low . . . (He sits down, brooding.)

## *The Pine-Tree.*

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### MISTRESS TONARMEE

(observes him. First she is astonished, but afterwards she becomes anxious. She sits down facing her husband, and after a rather long silence she begins:)

How pale you are, my lord, how much distressed !  
And secret words you murmur to yourself !  
Say, what has happened ? Say, why do you  
glance

So full of anger and anxiety  
At these poor boys ? Oh, do not look so wrathful.  
Let me beseech you, Ganzō, my dear lord !  
See here, this boy. 'Tis the new pupil. And  
Methinks, he is a nice and handsome child.

(To Kotarō.)

Approach now, Kotarō, and greet your master.

### KOTARŌ

(makes a deep obeisance and cowers down).

My lord, please take me. For I will with all  
My heart be faithful, true, obedient.

### GANZŌ

(looking at him thoughtlessly).

'T is well. Return you to your place.

(KOTARŌ gets up again. GANZŌ by chance notices his face.  
He seems astonished and throws several rapid glances at  
the child. His aspect slowly becomes less dismal.)

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

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(Aside) I marvel !  
This is . . . (Aloud) Ha Kotarō ! . . . You are . . .  
in truth . . .  
Come here and look at me. (Aside) There is no  
doubt . . .

(Aloud)  
You are . . . You're a good boy, my Kotarō,  
A pretty boy, a fair, well-mannered boy,  
Of goodly stock.

(To Mistress Tonarmee) Do you not think so ?

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

Yes,

And I am happy that he pleases you,  
For when you saw him, all the gloomy clouds  
At once fled from your face. Believe me : he  
Will be a clever scholar. When his mother  
Who brought him here . . .

### **GANZŌ**

(interrupting her).

His mother ? What ?

His mother ?

Is she still here ?

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

She left in a great hurry,  
Important business was expecting her  
In the next village. But she will return . . .  
She'll not be long.

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

**GANZŌ**

(constrained).

Oh . . . Is that so ? . . .

Not long ? . . .

Yes . . . Yes . . . What did I say ? . . . My  
mind is absent . . .

I am engaged upon important things.

'Tis holiday this afternoon. The boys

May play now in the back room, as they like.

But no mischief ! No noise ! I do not wish

To be disturbed, ye rascals !—Put your things

Away first . . . neatly . . . decently . . . Now  
go.

'Tis holiday.

(THE BOYS get up. There is a great noise. Having packed their writing apparatus, they put their desks in a corner of the room. Then they leave with cries of joy. GANZŌ looks after them thoughtfully. MISTRESS TONARMEE, when they have left, shuts the door and comes back to her husband. She looks around as if to see whether they are unobserved and then sits down opposite him.)

**MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

Why are you worried ? Say,  
What has occurred ? When you arrived so pale  
and so

Depressed, at once some secret apprehension  
Pervaded all my frame. And afterwards . . .

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

---

You seemed to muster all our boys. It was—  
Forgive me—it was strange and terrifying—

(GANZŌ nods half absently.)

And then—quite suddenly—'twas odd—I saw  
A flash that darted from your eyes. It was  
As soon as you had noticed the new boy.  
Ill luck,—I am afraid,—ill luck awaits us.

### **GANZŌ.**

Ill luck?—Yea—verily—because— . . . In short  
We are betrayed. Discovered is the secret  
That here our young lord is concealed, that here  
As our own son we rear him. Tokeecheera,  
The chancellor, knows this full well and longs  
To slay the last of Sugawara's offspring  
Whose vengeance would be feared should he  
grow up.

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

Oh, frightful news ! I feared it ! And, my lord,  
How did you learn that ?

### **GANZŌ.**

At the mayor's party.  
It was a trap. A trap to catch me ; to  
Prevent us from a timely flight. Gembah,

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

The chancellor's chamberlain approached  
me. More than  
A hundred men followed his steps. "Ganzō!"  
Cried he, "We know thy secret. Yes, we know it!  
That boy, whom wrongly as a son thou claimest,  
Surrender him to us. For 'tis young Shoozigh.  
Oh wicked, evil, vicious man! How darest thou  
Still shield the enemies of Tokecheera?  
The order hear that we now bring: Within  
Two hours thou wilt deliver us the head  
Of young Shoozigh. If not,—we are to enter  
Thy house, ourselves to fetch that urchin's head.  
And as for thee : the chancellor's wrath will find  
Thee soon."—Such were his words. How had I  
liked  
At once to give an answer to this scoundrel,  
An answer with the sword! But they were many,  
And shrewdness seemed a better thing than force.  
Therefore, I swallowed my repugnance, seeming  
To obey, but asked that they would grant me  
time,  
So that I might achieve the deed. Beside him  
There stood Matsuō, he, the only one  
At court, who knows Shoozigh. The chancellor,  
So that the head might be identified,  
Had summoned Matsuō. Oh shame, oh shame!

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

He, too, then, has forgotten our old lord,  
Forgotten gifts, support, and aid ; and now  
Betrays his offspring. What disgrace ! So ill  
Is he, so weak, his feeble limbs can scarce  
Support him. But for crime and treachery  
He still has strength. Now listen well. We are  
Surrounded, and we cannot fly. I must,  
Must find a head resembling young Shoozigh's.  
For if I fail, he's lost. On my way home,  
I meditated : What, if in his place  
One of my pupils I should sacrifice?  
But how could anybody be deceived  
By such low features ? Who could deem he saw  
The visage of a noble, high-born child ?  
Thus, full of pain and anguish came I home,  
Despairing lest I should not save Shoozigh.  
And suddenly I saw that unknown boy.  
In truth, say, is he not like our young lord ?  
'Tis Heaven, wife, sent us that child ! The gods,  
Who will deliver our young lord, have sent  
This substitute, and sent him in the hour  
Of need. 'Tis the will of the gods, beyond  
All doubt ! The boy must die. His evil spirit  
Has placed him in our hands. Yes, we will kill  
him,

And to the messenger we will deliver

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

His head. Then—let us flee, flee rapidly  
With our young lord. If we make haste, we can  
In a few hours gain the frontier, and so reach  
Kawachi, where we need not fear detection.

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

Hour of despair! Alas! Oh, is it true  
That cruelly we must shed this guiltless  
blood?——

'Tis true. We must. For nothing is as holy  
As duty to one's lord. And if we had  
To sacrifice a world—well, 'twould be done.  
But will it be of use? Did you not say  
Yourself : Matsuō is to testify  
If truly 'tis the head. He knows the boy.  
His eye will never be deceived. 'Tis all  
In vain. He will find out our stratagem.

### **GANZŌ.**

Well, if he does, 'twill be his doom! I'll watch  
His features, wife, my sword in hand. And if  
It must be, if it must, I'll throw him down  
With one bold stroke! Then like a tiger, casting  
Myself upon his men, I'll drive them forth.—  
Or . . .

Or I will die with my young lord, in order



## ***The Pine-Tree.***

---

That on his journey to the other world  
He may be followed by his faithful servant.  
However, there is little danger that  
Matsuō will frustrate my sound design.  
The likeness of the boys is marvellous,  
And what dissimilarity there is  
In life—will surely disappear in death.  
But peril threatens from another side :  
The mother ! If she should return, ill-timed,  
Ask for her boy, raise an alarm, and hinder  
The flight—then —if she comes—then woe to her !  
She, too ! . . .

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

She, too ? . . . Oh, word of dread and horror !  
With all sorts of discourses will I try  
And put her off, will, when she comes . . .

### **GANZŌ.**

No ! no !

Already her mistrust may be aroused.  
For people talk and say that in the village  
Peculiar things to-day will happen. Therefore,  
She will insist on seeing her son. It must  
Not be ! Too weighty are the stakes ! I pray,  
Pray fervently she may not come. But if

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

She comes, she never, nevermore must leave us.  
To do some devil's deed we are appointed ;  
So let us devils be without a scruple.  
She dies !—must die ! The safety of our lord  
Demands it.

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE.**

Well, let us be devils, if  
It can't be otherwise. (Crying) Oh, wretched  
child,  
Ill-fated mother ! Why did she come to-day  
Entrusting us with her beloved treasure ?  
And woe to us who undertook to be  
His father, mother—and who'll butcher him.  
Oh, day of grief and sorrow, mournful day !



(GEMBAH opens the door. MATSUŌ is seen sitting in a litter.  
SOME PEASANTS push into the courtyard, pursuing both  
knights with humble obeisances.)

### **SEVERAL PEASANTS.**

Oh, mighty lords, have pity ! Our children  
are also within. Oh, mercy, mercy !

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

---

### **FIRST PEASANT.**

My little boy is only just beginning to write.  
Oh, let him go free !

### **SECOND PEASANT.**

Lord, my grandson ! If by mistake you should cut off his head, you couldn't put it on again. Oh, let him go free, Sir knight !

### **THIRD PEASANT.**

For the love of heaven, be careful. My boy is just the same age as the young lord. For the love of heaven, let me go and fetch him.

### **MANY.**

Let us go in, dear Sir knights !

### **GEMBAH**

(brutally driving away the peasants who are crowding about him).

Cursed, burdensome mob ! They all buzz together like blow-flies. To hell with you ! Nobody will harm your dirty, silly brats. Take them away and hurry ! (He turns his back to them and laughs ironically.) To mistake idiotic peasant faces for the features of a *samurai* ! . . . ha, ha, ha, ha !

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### MATSUŌ

(comes out of his litter, slowly approaches the door, leaning heavily on his long sword, using it as a support).

All the same, Gembah, be not too hasty in giving them their liberty. I alone bear all the responsibility, for I alone know the boy. How easily one of these peasants could have been brought into the plot and now pretend Shoozigh to be his son! (To the peasants) Be calm, you. Call your children by their names, I wish to see them before giving them up to you.

### ALL THE PEASANTS

(shout names at the same time).

### MATSUŌ.

One after the other!

(He holds the handle of his sword with an iron grasp. And while GANZŌ and MISTRESS TONARMEE listen with anxiety from within to the names called out, the fathers and hoary headed grandfathers wait, full of concern, outside the door.)

### FIRST PEASANT.

Choma, Choma!

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

---

### **GANZŌ**

(standing near the door that leads to the backroom repeats the names called out, shouting them into the back room).

Choma, approach!

### **CHOMA**

(enters).

Here am I.

### **MATSUŌ**

(gazing at him).

This one has thoroughly smudged his face with ink. But even if he were washed he would never become clean. Let him go, it is not he.

(THE FIRST PEASANT takes Choma's hand and leads him away.)

### **SECOND PEASANT.**

Is Ewama here?—Ewama!

### **EWAMA**

(arrives).

Yes, grandfather, here am I.

### **MATSUŌ**

(gazing at him).

A nice lad, with a round face like a fresh persimmon! Away with him.

(THE SECOND PEASANT takes him up "pick-a-back," and goes away with him.)

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### THIRD PEASANT.

My darling, my dickie-bird, my pretty one !

### SILLY

(the fifteen-year old boor).

Here am I. (Seeing that Ewama is carried away on his grandfather's back he cries :) Take me also pick-a-back, daddy dear, pick-a-back ! Pick-a-back ! (He howls.)

### THIRD PEASANT.

Don't cry, dickie-birdie, don't cry.

### GEMBAH

(laughs sneeringly).

This boor with his horse-legs and his sparrow-voice hardly needs your decision, Matsuō ! He would be a nice prince ! Wouldn't he ? (Looking after him.) The old fool takes really his lanky idiot pick-a-back. Look at him slinking away like a cat that has stolen a piece of dry salmon !

### FOURTH PEASANT.

Tokuzan ! Tokuzan ! For the love of heaven, Sir knight, don't mix him up with the young lord Shoozigh. Isn't he a beautiful boy, Sir knight ?

(TOKUZAN is about to steal away, but MATSUŌ catches him.)

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### MATSUŌ.

Stop, my boy, stop ! Is yours a guilty conscience ? Let me look at you more carefully. Your face has the shape of a melon, and your complexion is quite white, oh ! (Looks again at him.) But you are dirty, you, you filthy urchin. Run away as fast as you can. (Kicks him.)

### GEMBAH

(angrily).

Pooh, Ganzō, call up the last three of these peasant brats together. From what I have seen up to now, I would dare decide alone. It's turnips that grow on a turnip field.

(GANZŌ as he has been told, calls the last three boys ; GEMBAH and MATSUŌ examine them rapidly and let them go. The sliding door is closed. GEMBAH and MATSUŌ sit down opposite Ganzō.)

### GEMBAH.

Now then, Ganzō, do what you promised me. Before my very eyes, so you have sworn, You will behead the boy. Make haste, and then Deliver me the head !

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### GANZŌ

(calmly and self-assured).

And do you think  
That I can catch the chancellor's noble son  
Unceremoniously by his young throat  
And wring his neck, and cut then off his head,  
As if he were a dog ? A little patience !  
Give me some time, Sir, to achieve it. (He gets up  
and is about to go into the back room).

### MATSUŌ.

Stop,  
Ganzō, one instant ! (He stares at him.)  
'Tis in vain you try  
To cheat us. If you think that in this short  
Delay you may remove your little lord  
Through some back door, your cunning comes  
too late.  
More than a hundred men surround your house,  
And not a rat could possibly escape.  
Nor think you that you can deceive me, if  
By chance you offer me another head  
Believing all dissimilarities  
Might be by death effaced. But such a trick,  
My friend, could not mislead me. Very soon  
You would repent. . . .



## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### GANZŌ

(scarcely able to restrain himself).

Keep for yourself your care,  
'Tis stupid and superfluous. The real  
Authentic head shall soon lie here before you,  
And ev'n your weak distorted eyes will not  
Mistake it.

### GEMBAH

(impatiently).

Spare yourself these words and go !  
'Tis time for deeds now, not for empty talk.

(He gives Ganzō a wooden box into which to put the  
head. GANZŌ exit through the centre door.)



(There is a pause. MISTRESS TONARMEE sits, listening  
uneasily, while MATSUŌ glances around inquisitively.  
After a while he counts the desks and book-boxes.)

### MATSUŌ.

How strange, how singular ! These little devils  
Which we let run—were there not seven? Now!  
There is one desk too many, I count eight !

(To Mistress Tonarmee.)

Tell me, to whom belongs this desk ? (Shows  
Kotarō's desk.)

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

**MISTRESS TONARMEE**

(frightened and confused.)

This desk . . .

To the new pupil . . .

**MATSUŌ.**

What ?

**MISTRESS TONARMEE**

I'm tattling . . . No,  
There's no new pupil, sir, no !—don't believe it.  
It is Kwan Shoozigh's desk, Kwan Shoozigh's,  
really,  
Believe me . . .

**MATSUŌ**

(impatiently.)

Well, I do believe you. But,  
Why does not he make haste. My illness . . .  
I . . .

(Behind the scene a noise like the falling of a body is heard; MISTRESS TONARMEE starts wildly, MATSUŌ makes only a scarcely noticeable movement. MISTRESS TONARMEE first moves as if to hurry into the back room, but masters herself and remains standing full of anxiety).

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### GANZŌ

(enters, holding in his hand the closed wooden box, and places it quietly before Matsuō.)

What you commanded is fulfilled. Here is Kwan Shoozigh's head. Now examine it well, My noble lord Matsuō ! Be severe !  
Make no mistake.

(He sits down somewhat to one side, watching Matsuō sharply, and holding the handle of his sword.)

### MATSUŌ

(to some of the soldiers which GEMBAI has meanwhile beckoned into the room.)

Look out, you men ! Go there !

(pointing to Ganzō.)

And watch this couple.

(He draws the box as near as possible towards himself ; keeping his eyes shut he pulls up the lid. Then, slowly, as if he were dreaming, he opens his eyes. He looks at the head for some time in deep silence, then he touches it with a slightly trembling hand. For the fraction of a second an expression of mental pain, only suppressed with difficulty, passes over his features, but disappears immediately. The others are filled with anxious expectation.)

**MATSUŌ**

(after a pause, slowly, with stoical calm.)

Well, there is no doubt !  
This head is Kwan Shoozigh's . . . There is no  
doubt !

(He shuts the box, pressing upon the lid. GANZŌ  
and MISTRESS TONARMEE sigh with relief, and  
quickly glance at each other.)

**GEMBAH**

(gets up).

At last, at last ! You have behaved with courage,  
Ganzō, and have deserved some compensation.  
For having hidden Kwan Shoozigh instead of  
Delivering him to us you should have died !  
But as you made amends, as you performed  
With your own hand the execution—you  
Are pardoned.

(To MATSUŌ.)

Come, Matsuō, come, make haste,  
We now will hurry to the court, and bring  
Immediately the happy news to Shihei.  
He waits with violent impatience there  
And burns to hear our embassy's success.

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### MATSUŌ.

You're right, friend Gembah, bring him speedily  
These long expected news. Bring the head also.  
But I must be excused. I am unwell—  
Worse is my malady than it appears,  
Indeed, much worse. Obtain for me permission  
That I may be dispensed from further service.

### GEMBAH.

That shall be as it pleases you. Go home,  
And take care of yourself. As for your duty,  
'Tis done. Farewell !

### MATSUŌ.

My duty's done. Farewell !

(GEMBAH takes the box and exit with the soldiers, MATSUŌ follows him, leaning wearily on his sword. He enters his litter and is carried away.)



(For a while GANZŌ and MISTRESS TONARMEE remain sitting, fixed in amazement, and look incredulously in the direction which the others have taken. Then GANZŌ goes to the door and bolts it. Both sit down once more, facing each other, and heave a sigh of relief. MISTRESS TONARMEE raises her clasped hands to heaven, and bows down to the floor several times, as if offering a prayer of ardent thanksgiving.)

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### GANZŌ.

The gods be thanked—and thou, great Buddha,  
too !

Indeed, our lord, by his exalted virtue  
Has brought upon us heavenly protection.  
This devil's open eye was closed with clouds,  
Was struck with blindness. Yea ! Rejoice, my  
wife,  
And may our dear young lord live many days !

### MISTRESS TONARMEE.

I scarce believe it. Was it our lord's spirit  
That sat upon Matsuō's eyes ? Or was  
The child itself a gracious kindly spirit ?  
To take a common flint for some rare jewel !  
Oh, let us thank the gods with all our heart !

(At this moment someone outside knocks several times at  
the door. GANZŌ and MISTRESS TONARMEE get  
frightened.)

### MISTRESS CHEEYŌ

(outside).

Holloa, open the door ! 'Tis I, the mother of  
the new pupil ! Let me come in !

## ***The Pine-Tree.***

---

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE**

(whispering, afraid).

Good heavens, Ganzō, it is the mother! We are lost! What's to be done? What shall we say?

### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ**

(outside).

Open! Open! (Knocks louder.)

### **GANZŌ**

(angrily, to Mistress Tonarmee).

Silence, foolish woman! Do you not hear me? Keep quiet, we shall manage somehow or other.

(He pushes Mistress Tonarmee aside, opens the door and lets in Mistress Cheeyō.)



### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ**

(in visible alarm).

Ah! Is it you, Master Takebe Ganzō? Are you the worthy master? I brought you my boy this morning. Where is he? I hope he is not a nuisance?

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

**GANZŌ.**

He is not !—He is there in the backroom, playing with the other boys. Do you wish to see him ? Will you take him home ?

**MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

Yes, let me see him, I will take him away.

**GANZŌ**

(getting up).

Then come. Will you please enter this room . .

(MISTRESS CHEEYŌ turns towards the backroom door :

GANZŌ, behind her, draws his sword and strikes at her, but at this instant she turns round and cleverly evades the blow. She runs among the desks, takes that of her son, and wards off with it another blow from Ganzō.)

**MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

Stop, stop !

**GANZŌ**

(strikes once more).

To hell !

(The stroke splits the desk into pieces, and from it falls a white shroud, papers with prayers written on them, a burial flag, and other articles used at a burial).



## ***The Pine-Tree.***

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**GANZŌ**

(surprised).

The devil ! What is this ? (He drops his sword.)  
What does this mean ?

**MISTRESS CHEEYŌ**

(on her knees, bursting into tears).

Oh, sir, I beseech you. Did my son die the death of sacrifice ?—Sacrificed to his young lord Kwan Shoozigh ?—Or not ?—Oh, I beg of you, tell me the truth !

**GANZŌ**

(dumbfounded).

How ? What ? The death of sacrifice ? Your son sacrificed ? Did you then . . . on purpose ? . . . You could purposely— ?

**MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

Oh, my darling, my beloved child ! Sacrificed, voluntarily sacrificed, so as to save his lord's life. What use would then be this shroud, these prayers, this flag with the inscription on it : "*Namu Amida Butsu*" ?

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### GANZŌ.

Woman, you horrify me. I cannot understand !  
Who are you ? Who is your husband ?



(Again there is a knock at the door. MATSUŌ opens it from outside, enters, shuts the door behind him, and sits down gravely).

### MATSUŌ

(recites the verses written by the chancellor,  
Saguwara-no-Michizane).

*“ The plum-tree follows me through the air,  
Withered and dried is the cherry-tree.  
Should then the pine-tree so lofty and fair  
Alone be heartless and faithless to me ? ”*

Rejoice, beloved wife, our son has died  
The noble death of sacrifice for our dear lord !

(MISTRESS CHEEYŌ throws herself on the floor crying loudly.)

### MATSUŌ

(much moved, turns towards her.)

O, my good wife, my perfect, faithful wife,  
Yea, weep a mother's tears . . . well may you  
do so.

(To Ganzō.)

You must forgive, Ganzō : The hearts of parents  
Claim now their rights with overpowering force.

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

### GANZŌ

(between surprise and emotion.)

I cannot grasp it. Do I dream ? Or is this  
Reality ? Matsuō, you, the vassal  
Of Tokeecheera, are you *not* our foe ?  
Have you not broken long ago the bonds  
Which tied you formerly to Michizane's house ?  
Just now I heard you talk and . . . your own  
son . . .  
And consciously — your son — I am amazed.

### MATSUŌ.

Well may you be surprised. Disastrous fate,  
Fate that misled me on a foreign path,  
Fate that enticed me to assist a lord  
Who rages ruthlessly against the men  
I loved and worshipped since my early youth,  
Against the lord and patron of my kindred,  
Against my father, woe ! against my brothers !  
Oh ! How I suffered to be parted from  
All I respected, to be called ungrateful,  
To know it was deserved, and all the same  
Not to be able to do otherwise,  
Lest I should basely break my feudal oath.  
Such grief, affliction, sorrow must I bear

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

That I can only think, 'tis punishment  
For crimes committed in a former life.

I could not bear it any longer. So,  
In order to detach myself unnoticed  
From Tokecheera, I pretended that  
Some illness had befallen me and asked  
To be discharged from service. And, just then,  
There came the news that in your house was  
hidden  
Kwan Shoozigh.—Tokecheera's order was  
To kill the august child at once, to kill him  
Before you could succeed, friend, in escaping.  
To kill him and to bring his head to court  
In attestation that the order was  
Fulfilled. I was the only one who knew  
Kwan Shoozigh's features. Therefore I was  
ordered  
To follow here the messenger, so that I  
Might answer for the victim's genuineness.  
Such were the terms of my dismissal.  
And now, Ganzō, now you have seen me doing  
My duty, my last duty, let me thank  
The gods from my heart's depth! For have  
they not  
Allowed me to atone for my offence

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

And rid me of the burden of my crime  
At last ? I knew, Ganzō, that you would try  
To baulk the murd'ers of your youthful lord.  
Yet what, what could you do ! There was no  
time

For flight. Deception was the only means.  
And then I saw, my hour had come. At once  
I took the counsel of my own dear wife,  
My poor, courageous wife—and sent to you  
My son. I left it to the gods and you  
To use him as his young lord's substitute.  
I came to settle the account. I saw  
Those desks, and saw that there was one too

many,  
And knew then that my little boy was here.  
I realised what fate awaited me. But . . .  
Ah me, was the fair pine-tree to be heartless  
And faithless ? Oh ! The words of our good

lord,  
Our gracious, unforgotten lord, the words  
He aimed at me—resounded in my ears.  
The whole world seemed to shout it in my face ;  
Yea, thou art heartless—thou art faithless.

Think  
What I have suffered ! And had I not had  
A son, prepared to sacrifice himself

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

For his own father's fault, I should have been  
With my whole house subjected to the scorn,  
The shame of all the world.—My son! My son!  
Thou saviour of our honour!

### **MISTRESS CHEEYŌ.**

Saviour of  
Our honour . . . yes! Let us repeat these  
words,  
A loving tribute to the blessed spirit  
Of that dear child! Oh, may they rise to  
heaven,  
And may they fill him with the purest joy!—  
Alas! When here I left him, when he wished  
To follow me, my heart became so sad,  
So grieved to leave him in the jaws of death!  
Let me embrace once more my darling child!  
Oh, put him in my arms for the last time  
And let me for the last time fondle him!

(She throws herself to the ground, crying aloud.)

### **MISTRESS TONARMEE**

(approaches her full of pity).

Unhappy mother! I can feel for you  
In your affliction. I recall the words  
He to his master said when first he saw him:

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

“My lord, please take me. For I will with all  
My heart be faithful, true, obedient.”  
Do I but think of it, an icy shudder  
Pervades my frame ! and yet, no ties linked me  
To him. What then must you, his mother, suffer ?

### **MATSUŌ.**

Oh, master this o’erwhelming sorrow, wife,  
And let us bear with courage what the gods  
Have ruled must be our most distressing fate.

(To Ganzō.)

He knew, Ganzō, that he was going to meet  
His death, when he was brought here by his  
mother.

For I had told him, and of his own free will  
He came, a fragile child of scarce eight years,  
Yet fearless like a bold, undaunted hero.  
Tell me, how did he die ? Begged he for life ?

### **GANZŌ.**

He died a gallant death. No man could face it  
More boldly than he did. I drew my sword  
And whispered in his ear that he must die  
At once and on the spot. He just smiled gently  
And calmly offered me his neck, awaiting  
The stroke.

## *The Pine-Tree.*

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### MATSUŌ.

Oh brave, intrepid, faithful child !  
With such fidelity, with such devotion  
My brother also died in days gone by  
For his dear lord. They now will find each other,  
Will meet again, and in the other world  
Enjoy a rich reward for their heroic  
Sacrifice. (Sobbing.) Oh, pardon me, Ganzō, if I  
My tears withhold not . . .

(He weeps, and they all weep with him.)



(KWAN SHOOZIGH having heard the sobs in the next room,  
opens the door and enters.)

### SHOOZIGH.

Was it then for me,  
For me this deed of blood and cruelty  
Was done ? Had you but told me that these  
soldiers  
Were seeking me, I never would have let him  
Make such a sacrifice. What misery !  
How deeply you have shamed me !

(He weeps and covers his face with his sleeve. They all  
sob. MATSUŌ silently gets up, goes to the door and  
beckons to somebody outside.)



## *The Pine-Tree.*

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**MATSUŌ.**

My young lord !  
Not with an empty hand came I. No gift  
Could be more beautiful than that I brought you.  
Look there. (He shows the door near to which some men  
bring a closed litter, out of which SHOOZIGH's mother descends.  
She enters.)

**SHOOZIGH.**

O mother, my beloved mother !

(Shoozigh's mother.)

My son, my son !

**GANZŌ**

(after a short pause of joyful astonishment).

What do my eyes behold !  
Can it be true ? 'Tis you, my noble lady ?  
Oh, glad and joyful meeting ! Long ago  
We sought you vainly, ev'rywhere. But you  
Had disappeared. Where did you stay ? And  
where  
Found you a shelter ?

**MATSUŌ.**

Let me tell you all.  
When this bloodthirsty, cruel tyrant threatened  
Completely to destroy the noble kin  
Of Sugawara, I in secret led

## *The Pine-Tree.*

---

Our gracious lady forth to Saga, where,  
However, she was soon found out. Disguised  
I went to see her. Who in that old begging friar  
Could have suspected me ? Through many dangers  
I brought her here in safety, undiscovered.  
In safety ? Nay ! E'en now we are not safe.  
Therefore let us at once for our departure  
Make ready. We must make great haste and reach  
Kawachi, must have the frontier between  
Ourselves and our fierce enemy. And, besides,  
We there shall find the noble lady's daughter,  
Awaiting anxiously her mother and  
Her brother. Quick ! Depart at once ! The slightest  
Delay may mean irrevocable ruin.

(To Mistress Cheeyō.)

And now, wife, let us, as becomes his parents,  
Perform our sacred duty. Let us bury  
All that remains to us of our dear child,  
And offer sacrifice to his pure spirit.

(Meanwhile MISTRESS TONARMEE has gone in the other room. Now she comes back carrying in her arms the body hidden in a shroud. MATSUŌ and MISTRESS CHEEYŌ take off their outer garments, under which they already wear the white mourning dresses.)

## *The Pine-Tree.*

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### GANZŌ

No, no ! Matsuō ! It would be too heartless  
Were we to leave to you, the stricken parents,  
The mournful burden of this ceremony.  
My wife and I . . .

### MATSUŌ.

Oh, grant to me this duty.

(Significantly.)

For, friend, 'tis not my son whom I must now  
Lament and bury—'tis Shoozigh, the prince.

(He takes the body in his arms and carries it away. And  
while the others follow him, sobbing, the curtain is closed.)

THE END.





